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ABSTRACT

This study examined the formal curricula of 82 liberal arts institutions as described in college catalogs. These institutions included both Liberal Arts I (LAI) and Liberal Arts II (LAII) schools in the 1994 Carnegie classifications. Two recent studies have contended that many institutions identifying themselves as liberal arts colleges are really not. This contention has been based on the percentage of graduates in professional majors. Attention in this study was placed on relating the course descriptions to six attributes of the liberal arts curriculum, identified in the literature and through the comments of chief executive officers of liberal arts institutions. Findings indicate that professional majors dominate LAII institutions, However, the general education program at both LAI and LAII institutions appears to be the primary means of accomplishing attributes related to the formal curriculum of a liberal arts college. (Contains 35 references.) (SLD)

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The Curriculum of Liberal Arts Colleges: Beyond the Major

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Brent D. Cejda, Ph.D.

Lee S. Duemer, Ph.D.

College of Education

Texas Tech University

Box 41071

Lubbock, Texas 79409-1071

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Abstract

During the 1980s, many liberal arts colleges made adaptations to market and societal pressures by adding professional majors and graduate programs. Even with these changes, questions remain concerning the ability of the liberal arts college to survive. This question is highlighted by the fact that a number of private liberal arts colleges have ceased operations within the last 4 years.

Two studies have contended that many institutions identifying themselves as liberal arts college are really not (Breneman, 1990; Delucchi, 1997). This contention is based on a percentage of graduates in professional majors. The Carnegie classifications have also used the percentage of graduates in professional majors as the criteria in distinguishing Liberal Arts I (1973-1994 designations) or Baccalaureate—Liberal Arts (2000 designation) institutions. Yet others stress that there are additional aspects of the formal curriculum that should be considered.

This study examines the formal curriculum of 82 liberal arts institutions as evidenced in descriptions contained in college catalogs. These institutions include both Liberal Arts I (LAI) and Liberal Arts II (LAII) in the 1994 Carnegie classifications. Attention was placed on relating the descriptions to six attributes of the liberal arts curriculum, identified in the literature and through comments from chief executive officers of liberal arts institutions. Findings indicate that professional majors dominate LAII institutions. However, the general education program at both LAI and LAII institutions appears to be the primary means of accomplishing attributes related to the formal curriculum of a liberal arts college.

The Curriculum of Liberal Arts Colleges: Beyond the Major

There is a general consensus that the freestanding liberal arts college faced a period of crisis in the 1970s (Astin & Lee, 1972; Pfnister, 1981). The decade began with the projection that, among liberal arts colleges, 43% were headed for financial trouble, and 28% were already in financial difficulty (Cheit, 1971). By the end of the decade, the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education (1980) emphasized the hard choices facing higher education, stressing that many liberal arts colleges would need to change in order to survive. As predicted, a number of liberal arts colleges transformed themselves into comprehensive institutions during the 1980s (Pfnister, 1984; St. John, 1991). Cohen (1998) clearly documents the large increases in vocational curriculum between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s in American higher education. Astin (1998) presents data indicating a correspondingly sharp increase in materialism among freshmen between 1966 and 1996.

The clearest example of the change to a more professional curriculum in American liberal arts colleges is the 1987 edition of the Carnegie classifications (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching). In this edition, the following definition is provided for Liberal Arts Colleges II:

> These institutions are primarily undergraduate colleges that are less selective and award more than half of their degrees in liberal arts fields. This category also includes a group of colleges (identified with an asterisk) that award *less* than half of their degrees in liberal arts fields but, with fewer than 1,500 students, are too small to be considered comprehensive (p. 7).

A total of 400 private institutions are listed in the classification with only 106 (27%) meeting the definition of Liberal Arts II. Of the 294 institutions that are "too small to be

considered comprehensive," 257 (87%) had been classified as Liberal Arts II in the previous edition (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1976).

Although many institutions have made adaptations to market and societal pressures, there continues to be the question of the ability of the liberal arts college to survive (Breneman, 1990; Zemsky, 1995). This question of viability is highlighted by the fact that 6 private institutions (not including some small religious institutions) have closed since 1997 (Van Der Werf, 2000a; Van Der Werf, 2000b). The addition of professional majors has been so dramatic that two studies have attempted to analyze whether the liberal arts college is still a liberal arts college. Using data from 1972 and 1988 for all 540 Liberal Arts I and Liberal Arts II colleges, Breneman (1990) examined the percentage of professional bachelor's degrees awarded. Defining a liberal arts college as one that awarded 40% or more of the degrees in liberal arts majors, he concluded that there were 212 such institutions. Delucchi (1997) utilized information from *Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges* (1993) to identify institutions claiming to be liberal arts colleges, yielding a sample of 327 institutions. Using the majors of the bachelor's degrees awarded by the sample, he then examined whether the curriculum was consistent with the liberal arts claim. As with the Breneman study, consistency was defined as 40% or greater of the graduates in liberal arts fields. Delucchi's findings revealed inconsistency between the academic claims and the curriculum, with 68% of the institutions awarding more than 60% of their degrees in professional majors.

Breneman (1990) makes the case that the term liberal arts college indicates that the curriculum should include only the liberal arts, thus no professional majors should be

offered. Delucchi (1997) points to this argument to support the identification of a liberal arts college solely on the percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded in liberal arts majors. Both use the same percentage as that for inclusion as a Liberal Arts I institution in the 1994 Carnegie classification. The most recent Carnegie classification (2000) discontinued the Liberal Arts I and Liberal Arts II categories. Rather, 222 institutions are labeled as baccalaureate—liberal arts, determined by the awarding of at least half of the baccalaureate degrees in the liberal arts. We contend that using this one specific aspect of the curriculum, the percentage of majors in the liberal arts and sciences, to differentiate those that are and those that are not liberal arts institutions is problematic from three perspectives.

First, Breneman's argument assumes that there is a common understanding of what the liberal arts are and that a minimum percentage can be established for such a distinction. This does not seem to be the case. The Carnegie Foundation (1987) defines liberal arts and occupational/pre-professional disciplines as follows:

> The *Liberal Arts* disciplines include area studies, biological science, the fine arts, foreign languages, letters, mathematics, physical sciences, psychology, the social sciences, and interdisciplinary studies. *Occupational/pre-professional* disciplines include agriculture, the natural sciences, architecture and environmental design, business and management, communications, computer and information science, education, engineering, the health professions, home economics, law, library science, public affairs, and theology (p. 8).

This argument assumes that the liberal arts have remained static over time. Historians have stressed that the liberal arts have changed over time (Deighton, 1971; Rudolph, 1990). Further, the percentage used for Liberal Arts I status in the Carnegie classifications has changed. The first two editions did not establish a minimum percentage for classification as Liberal Arts I or II (Carnegie Foundation for the

Advancement of Teaching, 1973, 1976). Half of the degrees was the level for classification for both Liberal Arts I or II institutions in the third edition (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1987). The next edition used more or less than 40% as a distinction between Liberal Arts I and II (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1994) and the 2000 edition stipulates 50% to be identified as liberal arts (McCormick, 2000). Pace (1997) ranked a group of 13 Liberal Arts II institutions according to the percent of students majoring in basic liberal education subjects, reporting that 6 graduated between 43% and 72% liberal arts majors. Yet none of these institutions had been classified Liberal Arts I, pointing to the Carnegie Foundation's assessment that distinctions are not always clear cut and may be at least partially judgmental.

Second, there are arguments that indicate the curriculum of a liberal arts college is more than the majors offered. Bonvillian and Murphy (1996) contend that the primary challenge for the contemporary liberal arts college is the combination of professional preparation and the liberal arts. In a subsequent work, Breneman (1994) defines the liberal arts curriculum as an educational ideal. Rather than focusing on components of the curriculum (e.g., major, general education), those that elaborate on this ideal make reference to what we have termed attributes of the liberal arts college. Hawkins (1999) referred to a considerable breadth of studies as a descriptor of the liberal arts curriculum. Crimmel (1993) stresses that the key component of the liberal arts college is found in the aims and objectives (i.e., breadth of learning, integration in learning) of the curriculum. Lang (1999) pointed to the traditional aspect of developing civic responsibility as a key component of the liberal arts curriculum along with the more contemporary goals of

involvement in community problems and facilitating social change. Hersh (1999) argued that the end identified the liberal arts curriculum, such as graduates that are "articulate in their writing, speaking, and social behavior" (p. 181).

Third, an institution may appear to award degrees only with majors in the arts and sciences, but may actually stress professional education. One common example is in the area of teacher preparation. Students desiring employment as elementary teachers might major in psychology or sociology and secondary teaching aspirants often major in the discipline they wish to teach. A second example is with cooperative or collaborative programs which often result in the awarding of two degrees, one a liberal arts major (such as math), the other a professional major (engineering for example).

Our contribution to the literature was to contest the viewpoint that the liberal arts college could be defined by the type of majors offered or the number of graduates in professional majors. It is important to mention what Kuh (1995) has termed the other curriculum. A number of scholars have agreed that what happens outside the classroom (the other curriculum) is also a part of the educational process (Astin, 1993; Bowen, 1977; Chickering & Riesser, 1993; Kuh, 1993; Kuh, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Most certainly, the residential programs at many liberal arts colleges are integral components of the educational program. The purpose of our study, however, is to examine whether there is sufficient information to justify the claim that the formal curriculum of a liberal arts college cannot be measures solely by the types of majors offered or the number of degrees awarded in these majors.

To conduct our study we selected a sample of 82 institutions. All institutions were listed in the 1999 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Colleges ratings. Of this sample,

42 are listed as the 40 Best National Liberal Arts Colleges (because of ties 42 institutions are included). The other 40 are equally drawn from each of the four Best Regional Liberal Arts Colleges listings. Each institution in the National listing was classified as a Liberal Arts I college and all from the Regional listings were classified as Liberal Arts II colleges in the 1994 Carnegie classifications. We limited the sample to only private institutions (two public institutions are included in the Regional listings).

Our study was conducted in three stages. First, we completed a literature search to identify descriptors, descriptions, and definitions of liberal arts colleges. Through analysis and comparison, we identified 9 attributes related to liberal arts colleges. Second, we forwarded the attributes to the Chief Executive Officer (President or Chancellor) of 10 institutions (5 Liberal Arts I and 5 Liberal Arts II) randomly selected from the "Top Tier National" or "11-20 Regional" in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, asking for review and comment. As a result of comments we expand from 9 to 12 attributes. Of these 12, the following 6 are directly related to the curriculum:

1) Degrees offered--There is an obvious emphasis on baccalaureate education.
2) Degree Requirements--A substantial percentage of the degree requirements are in the area of general education.
3) General education--The purpose and goals of general education are compatible with the aims of a liberal education.
4) Major--The most popular majors include liberal arts and sciences disciplines.
5) Breadth of Learning--The curriculum requires the student to experience a variety of disciplines.
6) Coherence--The academic program provides for a common educational experience.

In the third stage, we utilized Delucchi's (1997) technique of using institutional information to identify claims regarding the attributes listed above. Catalogs of each institution were examined to determine claims regarding the attributes. Reviewing the Internet sites for each of the 82 institutions, we found that 45 had placed their catalog on-line. Catalogs for the remaining 27 institutions were obtained by written requests. We independently reviewed the catalogs to determine whether there were claims regarding the respective attributes, the extent of the claims, and the claimed process through which the attribute is realized. An independent observer verified the information we gathered. Finally, we compared our results concerning each institution.

Degrees Offered

The explosion in the types of baccalaureate degrees awarded by American institutions has been well documented. Rudolph (1977) identified 108 types of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degrees and 426 varieties of Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees awarded by American colleges and universities. Among the institutions in our sample, some offer only the traditional B.A. or B.S. while others award variations of these degrees. A number offer bachelor's degrees with specific disciplines listed in the title, such as Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Engineering, Bachelor of Music, and Bachelor of Social Work, to name a few.

Rather than focusing on the title of the degree, we questioned whether the institution maintained a commitment to undergraduate education. Of the National Liberal Arts Colleges, 66% offer only the baccalaureate degree, 24% offer the master's degree, and 10% offer a doctoral degree. One national institution also offers both a master's

degree and a law degree. Of the Regional Liberal Arts Colleges, 50% offer only the baccalaureate degree, 45% offer the master's degree, and 5% offer the doctorate.

We also examined the specific types of graduate degrees offered to develop a better understanding of institutional commitment to undergraduate education. Of the National Liberal Arts Colleges with master's degrees, one-third have a comprehensive graduate program, with majors across the respective disciplines. It is more common for National institutions to offer a specific master's or doctoral degree or to offer the degrees in selected majors. Our review indicated that institutional strengths determined when a National institution would offer the master's or doctorate in selected majors. A vital component of Oberlin College is a music conservatory. It makes logical sense that Oberlin offers a master's degree in music. Middlebury College has long been known for outstanding instruction in modern languages, the only doctorate offered by the institution.

Regional Liberal Arts Colleges that offer master's degrees predominately do so only in specific majors, the vast majority linked to professional programs. The two most common are MBAs and master's degrees in education. The two Regional institutions offering the doctorate do so only in selected majors.

Requirements for the Baccalaureate Degree

More than two-thirds (71%) of the National Liberal Arts Colleges use the number of courses rather than quarter or semester hours to describe requirements for the bachelor's degree. Slightly more than half (55%) of these indicate that 32 courses are required for the baccalaureate. Regional Liberal Arts Colleges overwhelmingly (93%) use quarter or semester hours to describe degree requirements. The range of requirements at Regional institutions is from 120 to 136. The mode of required hours is 128 (23%)

when converted to semester hours. We found it interesting that four Regional and one National institution(s) required different numbers of courses or hours for the respective types of bachelor's degrees, fewer hours required for the B.A. and more hours required for the B.S..

Rudolph (1990) traces the current curricular requirements to Andrew D. White, the first president of Cornell University. In his *Report of the Committee on Organization, Presented to the Trustees of the Cornell University October 21st, 1866*, White described that the organization of undergraduate education should include both professionally oriented courses and general education courses. We organize the first part of our discussion around the common terms of the major and general education.

The Major Requirement

All of the institutions included in our investigation require in-depth study in a discipline. This in-depth study is most often termed the major, but is also called the concentration and the field of study. The specific number of courses or hours required for the major varies greatly, from a low of approximately 30% to a high of nearly 60%. National Liberal Arts Colleges were more toward the lower end of requirements, with 9 institutions (21%) restricting all majors to less than one-third of the total degree requirements. The requirements for the major varied the most at Regional Liberal Arts Colleges, ranging from 24 to 72 hours. Almost two-thirds (61%) of the Regional institutions allowed the major to constitute 50% or more of the degree requirements. A number of Regional institutions, however, have a range of requirements that doubles in size (i.e., 32-64 semester hours), depending on the specific major.

The five most popular majors at National institutions are English (reported by 90% of the colleges), political sciences (71%), economics (67%), psychology (67%), and biology (62%). The five most popular majors at Regional institutions are Business (reported by 90% of the colleges), biology (65%), education (65%), psychology (60%), and nursing (28%). The differences in popular majors between National and Regional institutions provide examples of the wide range of credit hours required for the major. Four of the most popular majors at National institutions are in humanities or social sciences (English, political sciences, economics, and psychology). Typically these majors require between 30 and 42 hours. Three of the most popular majors at Regional institutions are professional majors (business, education, and nursing). These majors typically require between 50 and 66 hours.

General Education Requirements

As with the major, the specific number of hours required for general education varies greatly. This is, in part, due to differences in institutional definition of general education. We found several institutions identifying general education as everything except the major (including electives or minors), while others considered general education as a prescribed component not including the minor or electives. When general education is prescribed, requirements ranged from 20 to 49% of the degree program at National institutions and from 24 to 51% of the degree program at Regional institutions.

The most common terms to describe this component of the curriculum are core and general education. There is, however, a lack of consistency between the use of the terms and their representation in the curriculum. Rather than reporting percentages of terms, we found four basic approaches that more accurately reflect general education

requirements. These approaches are distribution, core, elective system, and mixed methods.

By far, distribution is the most common approach to the organization of general education, utilized by 55% of the National and 68% of the Regional institutions. The distribution approach requires the student to complete a prescribed number of course(s) from a number of broad disciplines. The most common disciplinary areas (listed alphabetically) are: English, Fine Arts, Foreign/Modern Language, Humanities, Mathematics and Sciences, Physical Education, and Social Sciences. At religiously affiliated institutions, Philosophy and Religion/Bible/Theology are added to the list of common disciplinary.

A core approach requires that all students complete a prescribed sequence of the same courses. We found a core utilized by 21% of the Regional institutions, but did not find this approach at any National institutions. A core also differs from distribution in that the approach often integrates subject matter from the respective disciplines. For example, Oklahoma Baptist University requires a course titled The Fine Arts in its core rather than allowing the student to select from an approved list (Music Appreciation, Arts Appreciation, Introduction to Theater, and the like).

At first glance, the elective system appears to be exactly what it sounds like, the student decides which courses and requirements constitute the general education component of the degree. While no Regional institutions utilize this approach, it is in place at 10% of the National institutions. Closer examination revealed, however, that in each instance, there are stipulations that, at the very least, guide the student. Smith College recommends seven major areas of knowledge and requires 64 credits outside of

the major. Two other common stipulations include a maximum number of courses allowed in the major and a maximum number of courses allowed from any one department or discipline.

The remaining institutions (35% National, 12% Regional) organized general education around mixed approaches. Mixed methods of general education most often include a small number of prescribed courses (a core) and a larger number of distribution requirements. Elizabethtown College requires a common freshman and junior seminar with distribution requirements comprising additional general education. Indeed, the most frequent core course in the mixed model is the First Year or Freshman Year Seminar. We also found another approach, the Great Books, in the mixed models. The Great Books approach begins with the assumption that students can be well-introduced to the various academic disciplines through reading and discussion of foundational works (great books). These foundational works become the focus of the classroom discussion, and it is the authors of these works, not so much the faculty, who become the students' teachers. As with the core approach, the ideal is not only to integrate the works read, but the disciplines themselves. None of the institutions in our sample used great books alone, most incorporated the approach with distribution requirements or required the selection of a great books course(s) as one of the distribution requirements.

Purpose and Goals of General Education

It should be noted that not all institutions list purposes and goals for general education. Some institutions list purposes and goals for the entire educational program, with general education contributing to the achievement of these goals. Other colleges simply state that in the tradition of the liberal arts, all students are required to complete a

general education component. We did not judge such statements to be purposes or goals. In instances where there were headings for various components of the general education curriculum, we included the headings as we felt they implied purposes or goals.

Both National and Regional institutions share three common purposes of general education. By far, the most common purpose can be summarized as to produce a liberally educated person (91% of institutions listing a purpose), followed by to provide breath in the educational experience (72%), and to provide a common (or coherence in the) educational experience (57%). Among the Regional institutions, 51% indicated developing the whole person as a purpose or goal of general education. Among national institutions, slightly more than one-third (34%) used terms such as social responsibility or citizenship. Two other purposes or goals were reported by more than 25% of the institutions (National and Regional combined), global awareness and understanding or appreciation of cultural differences. Goals such as spiritual development and religious understanding are consistently mentioned by religiously affiliated institutions.

Although a liberally educated person emerged as the most common purpose or goal, few institutions specifically defined what they meant by this term. Those that did included many of the terms listed above (breadth, coherence, whole person, social responsibility) as well as others such as the ability to learn/reason/communicate. The same is true for the specific goals of breadth and coherence. While the words were listed by many institutions, there is a lack of information on how these goals are accomplished.

Breadth and Coherence

Regional institutions predominately indicate that breadth is achieved through the general education component of the curriculum. Three Regional institutions encourage

breadth by requiring or restricting the number of courses from a given area. Common statements include "one course from each area is required" and "no more than two courses from any area can be counted". Regional institutions most often indicate they provide coherence in the educational program also through general education. Completion of common courses (35% of the institutions) is the most often mentioned attempt at providing coherence. Offerings in the humanities are the most cited common courses, followed by religion and philosophy. Although a course, there were a sufficient number of institutions requiring a common seminar (30%) that we consider it a separate means of achieving coherence. Approximately half of the Regional institutions using this approach require a freshman seminar. Proficiencies are the third indicated means of providing coherence (23% of the institutions), with reading, writing, computers, math, and speaking the most often listed areas. A final method to provide coherence is by attaching "flags" to courses. We use the term flag to indicate a particular emphasis within any number of courses rather than a specific course geared toward the emphasis. Four specific emphases were identified in regional institutions: writing, critical thinking, global issues, and understanding other cultures. Writing was the most common emphasis (57%).

National institutions predominately indicate that breadth is achieved through requiring or restricting courses from particular areas of study. Most common are statements that begin with "no more than X courses/credits can be counted towards". Less common are statements such as "courses are required from each of the 10 categories". National institutions provide coherence most often through the flag approach (57% of the institutions). The most common flag is writing or writing intensive

(58%). A close second (54% of the institutions) in providing coherence at National institutions are proficiencies. The most common proficiencies are a second language (61%) and quantitative ability (39%). Seminars (41% of the institutions) are the final common approach National institutions use to provide coherence. The overwhelming majority (88%) of these are freshman seminars.

Co-Curricular Requirements

We also found that 8% of the institutions in our study have co-curricular requirements. While these numbers are not high, we were struck by the extent to which they were elaborated in the materials we reviewed. These requirements can be categorized into three groups. Most common are requirements to attend a certain number of events, described as convocations, lyceums, cultural events, and general education events. Second, 23% of the institutions require proficiencies or competencies in certain areas. Simply completing courses fulfills many proficiency requirements, but a limited number of institutions assess overall proficiency. LeTourneau University requires a general education assessment examination. The sophomore-junior diagnostic project at King's College is an attempt to evaluate student progress in the major. A final co- or extra-curricular requirement is completion of a time intensive session, usually between the fall and spring semesters. Often these time intensive sessions focus on a specific social topic (e.g., the environment, world hunger) or a specific educational goal (e.g., cultural awareness, critical thinking). An anticipated benefit of such requirements is often touted as the opportunity for the student to interact more closely with faculty members.

Conclusions

Our study revealed that there exist two fundamentally different philosophies regarding the curriculum at liberal arts institutions. These distinct philosophies were found to vary depending on the national or regional identity of the college in question. Our conclusions do not imply any causality; rather they are descriptive in nature.

We found that professional majors were common among Regional institutions, often pursued by significantly more than the majority of students at the respective institutions. National institutions continued to hold to the tradition of not providing professional preparation. We expected to find more professional majors at Regional institutions. The extent to which they dominated the "best" Regional Liberal Arts Colleges must, however, be recognized.

These two different philosophies also extend into the general education component of the curriculum. General education requirements were less strictly defined at National institutions. No National colleges required a true core, some use an elective system. Thus, students are allowed considerable freedom in planning their own general education curriculum, and a liberal education is emphasized. While such general education curriculum promotes liberal education and breadth, it also allows for little coherence. It is entirely likely that two such students as the same college could proceed through a four-year course of study and not take the same class, even at different times. Regional colleges, on the other hand, relied more heavily on a core approach or fairly restrictive distribution requirements to ensure that all students share a common educational experience. The psychology and chemistry major are exposed to the same

body of intellectual heritage, though admittedly at the expense of breadth and a more liberal education.

Breadth and coherence in the curriculum does not receive the same attention in college catalogs as we found in the literature or through comments from chief executive officers. Virtually all of the Regional institutions that even mentioned breadth and coherence grouped these attributes with the general education component of the curriculum. While National institutions claim breadth is achieved through restricting the number of courses from a particular area, the freedom of student choice brings up the question of the extent of breadth and, as we mentioned earlier, coherence in the curriculum appears lacking. Uniqueness was found at both National and Regional colleges in our sample. Most often, aspects of the curriculum that distinguished an institution from others appeareded in co-curricular activities or as the means to accomplish breadth or coherence. At both National and Regional institutions these examples were most often found in the general education component of the curriculum. It appears that the general education component of the curriculum has become expected to shoulder many of the attributes associated with the liberal arts college.

Our findings reveal the greatest strengths and weaknesses of contemporary liberal arts colleges. It appears that Regional institutions have developed a successful blend of professional preparation and general education. This curricular organization does limit the breadth of study. In addition, there are questions as to whether students' continue to receive a liberal education. With more hours typically required for professional majors, fewer hours are given to general education and room for a minor or electives disappears. National colleges have successfully held the tradition of liberal arts majors. Their

curricular organization at least implies the attributes of breadth and liberal education. Coherence in the curriculum, however, seems to be lacking and the extent of freedom in student choice raises the question of the extent of breadth.

Are there aspects of the curriculum beyond the major that are important to distinguish this type of higher education institution? We believe there is evidence to indicate so. It appears that a considerable weight towards the ideal of a liberal arts college has been placed on the general education curriculum. This is certainly true at Regional institutions, where professional majors dominate. Yet many National institutions also use the general education curriculum to illustrate the liberal arts college ideal. Most certainly a discussion of "how much" of the curriculum should meet the goals of a liberal arts education is warranted. Equally important is a discussion concerning the contribution of the major to our identified attributes. Such information is lacking in the materials we reviewed. Addressing the question of whether what is said about the curriculum at a liberal arts college is an initial step. An important continuation is efforts to measure whether what is said actually occurs.

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